



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on OSCE/ODIHR Final Report on November 2004 U.S. Elections

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Paul W. Jones
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 7, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States welcomes the final report of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission on the November 2004 U.S. general elections and its comprehensive consideration of electoral issues in our country.

We appreciate its many positive findings, including its observations on the dedication of state and local officials and poll workers; the positive impact of the Help America Vote Act and the new Election Assistance Commission; efforts to provide access to voting for the disabled; and the many contributions of civil society.

We also appreciate the specificity of ODIHR recommendations, which attempted to take into account the unusually decentralized nature of the U.S. system.

In line with our November 11, 2004 statement to the Permanent Council, the United States would like to re-emphasize that, while decentralization does pose certain challenges, overall it brings democracy closer to the people.

The final report itself cites, on a number of occasions, innovative state practices that other U.S. jurisdictions can study for their possible applicability to their own circumstances.

Change and reform is inherent to U.S. democracy. We will always strive to enhance our electoral system.

In this spirit, we look forward to studying ODIHR's final report and will share it with relevant bodies in the United States.

The United States values the good cooperation we enjoyed with the OSCE Election Observation Mission.

Now that the final report on the U.S. election has been published, we warmly invite ODIHR to send a follow-up team to the United States to sustain a dialogue on its findings and recommendations.

We also look forward to providing a briefing on how the U.S. is seeking to improve its elections during the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on the Challenges of Election Technologies and Procedures on April 21-22.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.